

September 23, 2019 Uptown / Druid Hills Neighborhood Meeting

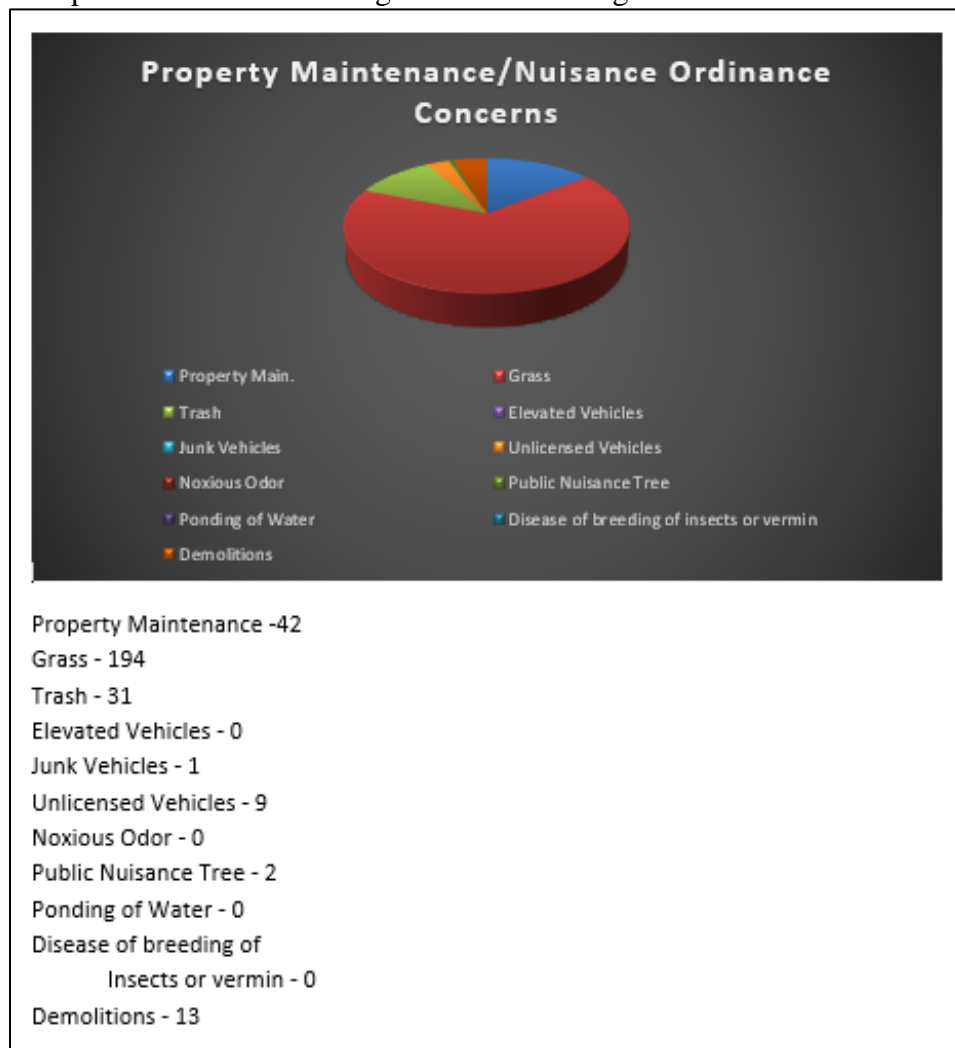
Martinsville City Council toured the Druid Hills / Uptown area on September 23, 2019 beginning at 5:30pm. Those present for the tour were Mayor Lawson, Vice Mayor Martin, Council Member Turner, Council Member Bowles and Council Member Woods. Staff participating included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Assistant City Manager Eric Monday, Inspector Andy Powers, Inspector Mark Price, IT Manager Esther Artis, and Martinsville residents Bill Moore, Barbara Morris and Judy Epperly

The tour began at 5:30 from the rear of the Municipal Building. Attendees traveled Uptown to Moss and Gravelly. There are properties in that area that will be discussed at the Tuesday Council meeting. The tour continued on to East Church to Brookdale, Fishel, Independence Drive and past Piedmont Community Services new group home. The tour traveled from Independence, Spruce, Brookdale, Hunting Ridge Road, Sam Lions and then Country Club to view the new Dick & Willie trail extension. Attendees traveled to Corn Tassel and back to Mulberry where a burned house was discussed. The tour continued to Parkview then Spruce St where two other properties were discussed, on to Jefferson Street, Thomas Heights and discussed residences with property maintenance concerns. The tour traveled to Hairston, Starling, Church and stopped at Rives Theater to discuss potential options after the structure fire. The tour ended and returned to the Municipal building around 6:30pm.

The Uptown / Druid Hills Neighborhood meeting was held at NCI Lecture Hall, 191 Fayette Street in Martinsville beginning at 7:30pm. Those present for the tour attended along with Clerk of Council Karen Roberts and Police Chief Eddie Cassady.

Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order. City Manager Towarnicki summarized the tour, the areas visited and concerns discussed.

Mark Price, Property Inspector summarized inspections, notices and recognized those properties that required action. Price explained that all complaints are posted to the City website, follow-up documentation if the complaint is valid or invalid, and if any action is taken or needed. Price invited residents to contact him with any concerns or questions.



Mayor Lawson opened the meeting to resident comments.

Teresa Leopold of 501 Mulberry Road and Oakdale, expressed concern about a neighboring property that is overgrown. Ivy is taking over that residence. Leopold said she has not been reimbursed for a bench that was damaged when a tree fell from the City property nearby. There is another property two lots over that connects to the park that is overgrown and has an overabundance of animals and ticks. The heavy trucks that travel her street vibrate her home and have caused cracks in her home and damage to her driveway. Leopold said the truckers cannot navigate the turns and will run over the curbing also.

Mr. Moore of 508 Mulberry Road said the roads in that area are not made to hold up to heavy traffic. The City needs to do something to improve the roads and traffic and the neighborhoods to attract residents to move back to the area.

Judy Epperly of 211 Thomas Heights owns the first house built on that street. She feels that the truck traffic originates in the County, not the City. The drivers want to take a short cut and she feels that they are following the GPS, which is usually the more direct route.

Carolyn Beale of 509 Mulberry Road also expressed concern about the truck traffic. She straightens pictures in her home often that are moved by truck traffic. Speeding traffic is also a danger to the

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children in the neighborhood. She thanked the City Inspections department for their action on the property across from DMV on Starling Avenue. There is another house on Oakdale that is vacant with tall grass behind the museum.

Bill Moore says that VDOT has installed signs about fines but it has not decreased the heavy equipment traffic and the air pollution caused by these trucks is bad for children. There would be less housing damaged and the property value would stay up if heavy vehicles were deterred away from Rives and Mulberry areas. He is paying over \$2,000 in property taxes to the City and is disgusted in the amount of truck traffic, loud cars and loud radios. The vibrations from the traffic is damaging his home. Police Chief Cassady feels that delivery trucks are cutting through from Food Lion and Valero to take the shorter routes to other local stores. The Police Department has notified those trucking companies and instructed them not to travel those roads. Cassady said he would assign extra patrol in those areas and will ask his staff to contact local businesses that receive truck deliveries to educate them to find other routes. He will ask the Deputy Chief to bring it up in the Transportation Safety Committee meeting. Moore asked Cassady to monitor speed in the area also. Eric Monday explained that the loud music goes against the noise ordinance but residents will need to witness, document the license plate and testify in court to be able to make changes.

Residents asked about the bridge on Starling and about who is responsible for the metal left on the bank behind the recycling business. City Attorney Monday has spoken to Kris Bridges in Inspections about the enormous amount of rusted metal. He will follow up with him next week.

With no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.

Karen Roberts
Clerk of Council

Kathy Lawson
Mayor